

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 EB-07 TRSE-00 /096 W

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R 071409Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1929

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 12152

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: FT ET PDEV

SUBJ: OLIVIER STIRN'S NOVEMBER 21-22 VISIT TO DJIBOUTI

REF PARIS 35265

SUMMARY: IN COURSE TWO-DAY VISIT DJIBOUTI DOM-TOM SECRETARY STIRN INDICATED JULY 1 INDEPENDENCE DATE FOR TFAI LIKELY IF SATISFACTORY PROGRESS CONTINUES. HE EXPRESSED VIEW NO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE IN SIZE FRENCH MILITARY PRESENCE PROBABLY DURING PRE-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD, AND STRESSED FRANCE WOULD ONLY CONCLUDE MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ACCORDS WITH INDEPENDENT TFAI. STEPS WILL ALSO BE TAKEN TO SPEED UP IDENTITY CARD ISSUANCE AND ADDITIONAL 6.5 MILLION FRENCH FRANCS WILL BE PROVIDED IN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. STIRN QUOTED AS STATING TAITTINGER WILL ALSO VISIT KENYA, SUDAN, SAUDI ARABIA AND OTHER NEIGHBORING STATES, AS WELL AS ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA (REFTEL). END SUMMARY.

1. NOVEMBER 23 REVEIL DE DJIBOUTI COVERED NOVEMBER 21-22

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VISIT OF FRENCH SECRETARY OF STATE FOR OVERSEAS DEPARTMENTS AND TERRITORIES OLIVIER STIRN IN SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL.

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2. REVEIL REPORTS STIRN SPENT MORNING OF 21ST DISCUSSING NATIONALITY QUESTION, DEFENSE, AND ECONOMIC MATTERS WITH FRENCH OFFICIALS, WITH AFTERNOON DEVOTED TO DISCUSSING SAME QUESTIONS WITH LEADERS OF POLITICAL GROUPINGS IN TFAI. MORNING OF SECOND DAY DEVOTED TO TOUR OF ARRONDISSEMENTS FOR FIRST-HAND VIEW OF DIFFICULTIES IN APPLYING NATIONALITY LAW AS WELL AS MEETINGS WITH PRIVATE GROUPS, VOLUNTEERS ASSISTING IN APPLYING NATIONALITY LAW, AND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. AFTERNOON DEVOTED TO TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS ABOARD FRENCH PATROL BOAT AND PRESS CONFERENCE.

3. IN PREPARED STATEMENT AT PRESS CONFERENCE, STIRN EMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE OF UNITY AMONG POLITICAL FACTIONS IN TFAI. HE STATED GOOD PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE IN APPLYING NEW NATIONALITY LAW, AND THAT HE HAD DECIDED TO INCREASE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN ISSUANCE OF IDENTITY CARDS TO ASSURE RAPID COMPLETION. HE STATED THAT ADMINISTRATIVE DECISIONS WITH RESPECT TO ID ISSUANCE SHOULD BE MADE IN "OPEN AND POSITIVE" SPIRIT, AND THAT ALL INHABITANTS OF THE TERRITORY WHO SO DESIRE SHOULD HAVE EITHER FRENCH OR FOREIGN IDENTITY DOCUMENTS.

4. FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF ID ISSUING PROCESS, MEETING BETWEEN POLITICAL GROUPS AND LIBERATION FRONTS TO BE HELD IN PARIS IN JANUARY TO DISCUSS FUTURE SCHEDULE. LEGISLATION TO BE INTRODUCED IN FRENCH PARLIAMENT IN DECEMBER FOR CONSULTATIONS ON INDEPENDENCE FOR TFAI, WITH PROVISION INCORPORATED WITHIN LAW PROVIDING FOR INDEPENDENCE WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF COMMENCEMENT OF CONSULTATIONS. JANUARY CONFERENCE WILL DISCUSS NATIONALITY QUESTION, FUTURE STEPS TOWARD INDEPENDENCE, AND POSSIBLE POST-INDEPENDENCE COOPERATION WITH FRANCE.

5. STIRN NOTED THAT FOR MOMENT, FRENCH COOPERATION WAS PRIMARILY IN FORM OF STUDIES, AND STRESSED THAT ONLY INDEPENDENT STATE COULD LEGITIMATELY SIGN BILATERAL ACCORDS. ON QUESTION OF FRENCH MILITARY PRESENCE, HE STATED FRENCH
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GOVERNMENT DID NOT WISH INSTALL FRENCH BASE IN FUTURE STATE, BUT THAT FRANCE PREPARED TO SATISFY DEMANDS OF INDEPENDENT STATE IN THIS AND OTHER AREAS. GOF SIMILARLY DISPOSED TO AID IN CREATION OF TFAI NATIONAL ARMY.

6. IN RESPONSE TO PRESS QUESTIONS, STIRN INDICATED THAT 6.5 MILLION FRENCH FRANCS WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO TERRITORY, 2.5 FRANCS FOR IRRIGATION AND 4 MILLION FOR PROJECTS PRIMARILY TO RELIEVE UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG YOUTH OF TFAI. HE INDICATED THAT GOF HAD NAMED INSPECTOR GENERAL

ROBERT TO COORDINATE INTER-MINISTERIAL ACTIONS ON TFAI, OUT STRESSED HIS ROLE PRIMARILY LIMITED TO COORDINATION AND TO ASSURE PRIME MINISTER FULLY INFORMED OF MINISTERIAL ACTIONS.

7. ON DATE OF INDEPENDENCE, STIRN INDICATED NO FIRM DECISION MADE, QUESTION WOULD BE IMPORTANT ONE FOR JANUARY MEETING, AND THAT DATE WOULD DEPEND ON PROGRESS IN VARIOUS AREAS. ON OTHER HAND, STIRN INDICATED THAT JULY 1 DATE MENTIONED SEEMED REASONABLE, PROPOSED FRENCH LAW WOULD PROVIDE FOR INDEPENDENCE WITHIN SIX MONTHS FOLLOWING CONSULTATIONS, AND THAT WITH NORMAL PROGRESS INDEPENDENCE WOULD BE REALIZED BY SUMMER. STIRN CAREFULLY DODGED QUESTION AS TO WHETHER OR NOT ABDALLAH KAMIL HAD REACHED AGREEMENT WITH GISCARD ON INDEPENDENCE DATE IN LATE 1977 OR 1978.

8. ON QUESTION OF UNION NATIONAL FOR INDEPENDENCE (UNI) JOINING GOVERNMENT COALITION, STIRN INDICATED THIS WAS MATTER FOR LOCAL OFFICIALS, BUT NOTED THAT LOCAL CONSENSUS CLEARLY INDICATED NECESSITY FOR UNI TO PARTICIPATE FULLY IN ON GOING DISCUSSIONS IN SPIRIT OF NATIONAL UNITY.

9. ON MILITARY QUESTIONS, STIRN INDICATED THERE WOULD BE NO SUBSTANTIAL MODIFICATION OF SIZE OF FRENCH FORCES IN TFAI IN PRE-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD; THAT MILITARY ACCORDS COULD ONLY BE MADE WITH INDEPENDENT STATE AND THAT IN CASE OF MILITARY INTERVENTION BY ETHIOPIA OR SOMALIA IN TFAI IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING INDEPENDENCE, DECISION OF GOF WOULD DEPEND ON ACCORDS CONCLUDED WITH NEW GOVERNMENT. HE INDICATED THAT TAITTINGER MISSION REPORTED REFTEL WOULD INCLUDE ETHIOPIA, SOMALIA, KENYA, SUDAN, SAUDI ARABIA, AND OTHER NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES.

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10. COMMENT: STIRN'S STATEMENTS ON STABLE FRENCH MILITARY PRESENCE UP TO INDEPENDENCE AND APPARENT GOF WILLINGNESS TO MAINTAIN MILITARY PRESENCE AFTER INDEPENDENCE POSITIVE SIGN. IT STILL UNCLEAR FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT AS TO OUTCOME OF NATIONALITY QUESTION. STIRN'S POSITIVE STATEMENTS ON "OPEN AND POSITIVE" INTERPRETATION OF NATIONALITY LAW WOULD APPEAR TO CONFLICT WITH VIEW EXPRESSED REFTEL THAT GOF PREFERS SLIGHT AFAR MAJORITY IN FUTURE STATE. IT ALSO APPEARS FRENCH MOVING TOWARDS EARLY INDEPENDENCE DATE DESPITE CONTRARY HOPES IN SOME QUARTERS OF TFAI.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INDEPENDENCE, ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, FORCE & TROOP LEVELS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ADDIS12152
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760452-1285
From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761264/aaaaccyg.tel
Line Count: 163
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 PARIS 35265
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 APR 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <16 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: OLIVIER STIRN'S NOVEMBER 21-22 VISIT TO DJIBOUTI
TAGS: PDEV, FT, ET, (STIRN, OLIVIER)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006